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SUBJECT: STAR-STUDDERED TIP CONFERENCE PRODUCES ETHICAL
PRINCIPLES AND ACTION PLAN FOR BUSINESSES

1. SUMMARY: Royalty, celebrities, and prominent business executives were in Athens January 23 for a roundtable discussion and fundraising dinner on the global business community's responsibility to combat trafficking in persons (TIP). Held under the slogan "END HUMAN TRAFFICKING NOW!" and organized by Egyptian First Lady Suzanne Mubarak, the participants shaped a statement of seven Ethical Principles and an Action Plan to be adopted by businesses. One thousand attendees at the fundraising dinner were barraged with anti-trafficking messages and surrounded by Greek and international stars. Two separate working groups committed to follow-up on the conference's papers. The international roundtable had broad Greek participation both from the GoG and business community, and local press outlets covered the event extensively. END SUMMARY.

The Roundtable: Learning about TIP

2. Before jetting off to World Economic Forum in Davos, CEOs from companies like Microsoft, Manpower, The Egyptian Financial Group, and Abercrombie and Kent Luxury Travel gathered in Athens on January 23 to discuss TIP and hammer out a draft ethics statement that was announced at Davos. The "Business Community Against the Trafficking of Human Beings" roundtable was organized by the Suzanne Mubarak Women's International Peace Movement under the auspices of the Greek Foreign Ministry, and hosted by the local NGO of Marianna Vardinoyianni, a UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador and wife of one of the world's wealthiest businessmen, as the start of an anti-TIP campaign. GoG Ministers of Economy, Education, Development, Justice, Foreign Affairs, Defense, Deputy Minister of Culture, the Mayor of Athens, and leader of the opposition PASOK party, among other Greek decision makers, attended the roundtable discussion. Vardinoyianni remarked, "It is an honor for Greece to host this historically important event which sends a message to the international business community to fight for the respect of human dignity and combat TIP."

3. BBC World Correspondent Lyse Doucet moderated as Roger Plant, director of the program to combat forced labor at the International Labor Organization (ILO); Nadereh Chamlou, advisor to the Chief Economist of the World Bank; and Ndiro Ndiaye, the Deputy Director General at the International Organization for Migration (IOM) gave preliminary information about definitions of TIP, its causes, and its victims. Queen Silvia of Sweden described Swedish domestic and international efforts to fight TIP, and the Secretary General of INTERPOL Ronald Noble discussed international law enforcement strategies. The Executive VP of Manpower and CEO of the Artoc Group covered the role of the private sector, and VP of the travel-behemoth Carlson Companies shared Carlson's existing commitment to a code of ethical behavior. U.S. NGO Vital Voices Board Chair Melanne Verwee led the discussion on Ethical Principles in the afternoon, and Nobel Laureate Jody Williams explained how to "mobilize public opinion." Other conference participants included Sabika, wife of the King of Bahrain, French performer Jean Michael Jarre, former UNSYG Boutros Boutros-Ghali, OSCE Special Representative on TIP Helga Konrad, a recorded video message from actor Richard Gere, and a total of 41 CEOs, according to a conference press release.

The Result: Ethical Principles and Action Plan

4. The roundtable produced two documents which Mubarak and the business working group pledged to present and elicit further support for at the Davos World Economic Forum. The "Ethical Principals against Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children" commits signatories to (in summary):

- have a position of zero tolerance toward TIP;
- contribute to awareness-raising campaigns and education;
- develop a corporate anti-TIP policy;
- ensure all personnel comply with that policy;
- encourage governments to revise national laws and regulations when necessary;
- report and share best practices;
- encourage business partners to apply these ethical

principles.

15. The Action Plan calls for awareness raising activities, elaboration of a universal business plan which integrates respect for human decency with social responsibility, advocacy for necessary revisions of national laws, investment in prevention and rehabilitation, funding to law enforcement agencies such as INTERPOL, investments in shelters, hotlines, rehabilitation, and training manuals, and the creation of a follow-up business working group. Copies of these documents are at www.womenforpeaceinternational.org.

Working Groups and Next Conference

16. Besides the two documents produced, the newly-formed business working group planned immediate follow up in Davos, and another working group with representatives from IOM, INTERPOL, the World Bank, ILO, and members of IOM's Business Advisory Board was formed. Additionally, Shafik Gabr, chairman of the Arab Business Council committed to a follow up conference in Cairo in May. Gabr noted, "We are not going to let this go. If we do, this problem will get very much out of control. We've declared war against it."

The TIP Social Event of the Season

17. The business roundtable was followed by an exquisite gala fundraising dinner where the world-renowned Gypsy Kings entertained the 1,000 guests (at 300 euros per ticket). Large video displays showed awareness raising anti-TIP messages and video clips, as well as video greetings by entertainers and TIP activists Ricky Martin and Richard Gere. Ambassador attended the event along with much of the Greek cabinet, the conference dignitaries, numerous parliamentarians, members of the diplomatic corps, and other Greek luminaries.

Extensive Press Coverage

18. The event was covered in major dailies To Vima, Eleftherotypia, Ethnos, Kathemerini, and in two additional articles the English Language Edition of Kathimerini. The Mubarak Foundation, Vital Voices, and IOM issued summaries on their web sites and press releases. IOM Deputy Ndiaye stressed, "For some time now we have realized the business community needs to be more greatly involved in dealing with this issue. This meeting represents a great step forward with a clear commitment expressed by all those present. IOM is convinced that this public/private partnership will be an important and effective asset in the struggle to end human trafficking."

19. COMMENT: According to expert interlocutors from OSCE and IOM (other meetings reported septel), this glitzy event was an effective vehicle to get the much-needed business community to focus on TIP. The executives who attended should be primed to implement anti-TIP plans and partner with deserving NGOs and international organizations. While the praiseworthy affair was international in focus, many of the roundtable participants and most of the gala dinner attendees were Greek businesspeople and lawmakers, again demonstrating the government's resolve to keep the issue of trafficking in persons on the national agenda. The immediate impact was obvious: in the week following the event there were two TIP newspaper articles and one full-color newsmagazine feature (septel) that highlighted the TIP problem in Greece. Embossos will use this momentum to reach out to the Greek business community on TIP.

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